

REPORT OF THE DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION COMMITTEE

(B & M Railroad Yard Park)

Beginning with its formation in the fall of 2003, the Downtown Revitalization Committee has been working toward its goal, a multipurpose historic, recreational, and educational park, located on Town owned land, known as the B & M Railroad Yard, next to the Alton Police Department.

The park is intended to be a place where parents with young children may walk to a small playground, and where families may gather to picnic or barbecue. There will be a mini walking path for townspeople to enjoy or find a bench where they can sit or read a book. The plans for this area also include a small replica of the old Mt. Major Railroad Station, designed to be used for events including concerts and dances; an educational boardwalk along the edges of the marsh area; an area designed to be used for a game of badminton or bocce ball; plus additional parking for Town employees and visitors. The members of the Alton Historical Society will be participating in the future plans for the 1896 Freight Building which could become a Railroad Museum, reflecting Alton's colorful railroad history.

Prior to the March 2004 Town Meeting, three Story Boards were circulated and displayed in numerous Town businesses, Gilman Library and Town Hall to acquaint townspeople with the proposed, multi-purpose park project.

During the 2004 Town Meeting, voters unanimously voted to approve a Warrant Article of \$5,000 for seed money for the project. Part of the funds to be used for the Round Table discussion and for the architectural design. The balance of the money would be applied toward completion of the final design and, as funds allowed, matching funds for grants as the DRC continues its grant application process.

In August, townspeople participated in a park design Round Table discussion. Survey plans showing the property boundaries, wetlands area, and the 55 foot wide railroad bed were provided for each participant and ideas were shared. A guided tour of the area was provided by the committee members, accompanied by Town Planner Peer Kraft-Lund and Architect/Designer Max Ferro.

The end result of this Round Table discussion was a report reflecting the participant's priorities for the new park, especially which facilities the community would like to see featured in the park and a conceptual design which reflected the consensus of opinions expressed during the summer Round Table discussion. This report which included the first conceptual design, was made available to the townspeople from October 2004 to February 2005, upstairs in the Town Hall, along with a request for comments, and an address provided where the comments could be sent to the Committee.

In October, a successful clean-up morning, advertised in MAIN STREET, resulted in the removal of brush, selected trees and rubbish from the proposed park site. Emptying out the Freight building, full of long time accumulation, was begun.

The money for the revitalization project will be raised through grant funding and through community-fund raising. Currently the committee is working on a brochure to acquaint townspeople with the project and to help raise funds for the project. Everyone is welcome to attend our meetings which are held monthly in the Town Hall. Notices are posted at the village Post Office and the Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted,
Judith E. Fry, Chairman

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Judith Fry, Chairman
Bonnie Barsanti
Marty Cornelissen
Nancy Merrill
Deanna O'Shaughnessy
Elizabeth Varney

Patricia Fuller, Selectmen's Rep.
Thomas Varney, Planning Board Rep.
Kathy Menici, Town Planner
Russell Bailey, Town Administrator